

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR ELECTROSURGICAL  
TREATMENT OF TURBINATES

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5           The present invention provides systems and methods for selectively applying  
electrical energy to a target location within the head and neck of a patient's body,  
particularly including tissue in the ear, nose and throat. In one aspect, a method is  
provided for reducing the volume of enlarged swollen tissue in the patient's nose, such as  
swollen nasal tissue, mucus membranes, turbinates, polyps, neoplasms, cartilage (e.g., the  
10 nasal septum) or the like. In particular, the turbinates are treated by positioning one or  
more electrode terminal(s) adjacent to the turbinates, and delivering electrically conductive  
fluid, such as isotonic saline, to the nasal cavity to substantially surround the electrode  
terminal(s) with the fluid. High frequency voltage is applied between the electrode  
terminal(s) and one or more return electrode(s) to remove a small tissue segment, channel  
15 or hole from the region near or in the turbinates to shrink the turbinates and prevent  
swelling, due to the formation of scar tissue as the wound heals. The high frequency  
voltage may be selected to effect a small amount of thermal damage to the walls of the  
channel or hole to facilitate the formation of scar tissue without extending this thermal  
damage beyond the immediate region of the target site.  
20